

RECORD OF REVIEW OF OER PUBLICATIONS FOR SECURITY/SANITIZATION APPROVAL

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RP 75-11

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1806

SECURITY REVIEW

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REMARKS

Sources - JPRS, AID, professional journals, IMF and IBRD economic surveys, State, FBIS, and some DOD reporting.

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SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:
PROSPECTS FOR RECOVERY FROM DROUGHT

KEY JUDGMENTS

- Good rains last summer at least temporarily broke the long drought in most of Sahelian Africa.
- The October harvests were short of requirements for 1975, but the food deficits to be filled by foreign donations are estimated at only about half of the 700,000 metric tons granted during November 1973 - October 1974.
- The drought's major economic toll was against the livestock herds, cutting exports of beef cattle and local barter of livestock products for cereals.
- Reduced cattle exports from the Sahelian states will cause sharp increases in beef prices in coastal African cities, such as Abidjan, Dakar, and Accra.
- The realization of a tentatively forecast long-term decline in precipitation would severely limit long-term Sahelian developmental prospects.
- Even if weather is good, the Sahel's poor physical resources limit prospects for making the area agriculturally productive.
- There are significant planning and financing deficiencies that impede efforts to accelerate development, as well as a lack of enthusiasm in some governmental circles toward improving the welfare of the herding tribes.
- Institutional shortcomings will tend to stimulate a recurrence of the cycle of overgrazing and consequent extreme drought vulnerability.
- Significant improvements in Sahelian living conditions during this decade are improbable.

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DISCUSSION

Introduction

1. Six of the world's poorest countries bore the brunt of the African drought – Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, and Chad¹ (see the map). Even before the drought, these states shared low growth rates and per capita incomes, widespread malnutrition, persistent trade deficits, and other of the impoverishing characteristics that distinguish the most disadvantaged of developing countries.² None had natural resources on a scale sufficient to nourish prospects for achieving healthy development in this decade.

2. The barren Sahara Desert blankets more than half of the areas of four of the countries – Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad. The first fringe of land south of the Sahara, called the Sahel, is barely more habitable, receiving only 10-20 inches of rainfall annually during June-September. The Sahel encompasses about one-fifth of the combined areas of the six countries. Mauritania and Niger have almost no area south of the Sahel, and livestock diseases spread by the tsetse fly limit the usefulness of the sub-Saharan southern areas in the other four states.

3. Despite the forbidding environment, farming and herding support more than 90% of the six countries' 25 million people. Except in Mauritania, most of the populations consist of farmers living in the south of the countries, where rainfall normally is just sufficient to grow sorghum, millet, and vegetables for family needs and some local marketing. Cultivation in the Sahel takes place mainly along the Niger and Senegal Rivers and the tributaries of Lake Chad. Livestock raising centered in the Sahel contributes all or most of the livelihood of about 25% of the six countries' combined populations (about 75% of Mauritania's). The extremely variable weather induces the herders to move most of their livestock in migratory patterns, leaving the sparse northern pastures at the end of the wet seasons for more bountiful pastures and harvested farm lands in the south, and returning as the wet seasons recur.

4. The practices of farming and herding are divided roughly along ethnic lines. Tauregs of Berber ancestry and Fulani tribes carry on most of the migratory herding in the Sahel. Bedouin Arabs herd mainly sheep, goats, and camels in the

1. Drought also was severe in a number of Ethiopian provinces. Other countries touched by the African drought include Gambia, Guinea, Dahomey, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Somalia.

2. Available economic statistics for the six countries are given in Table 1.

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